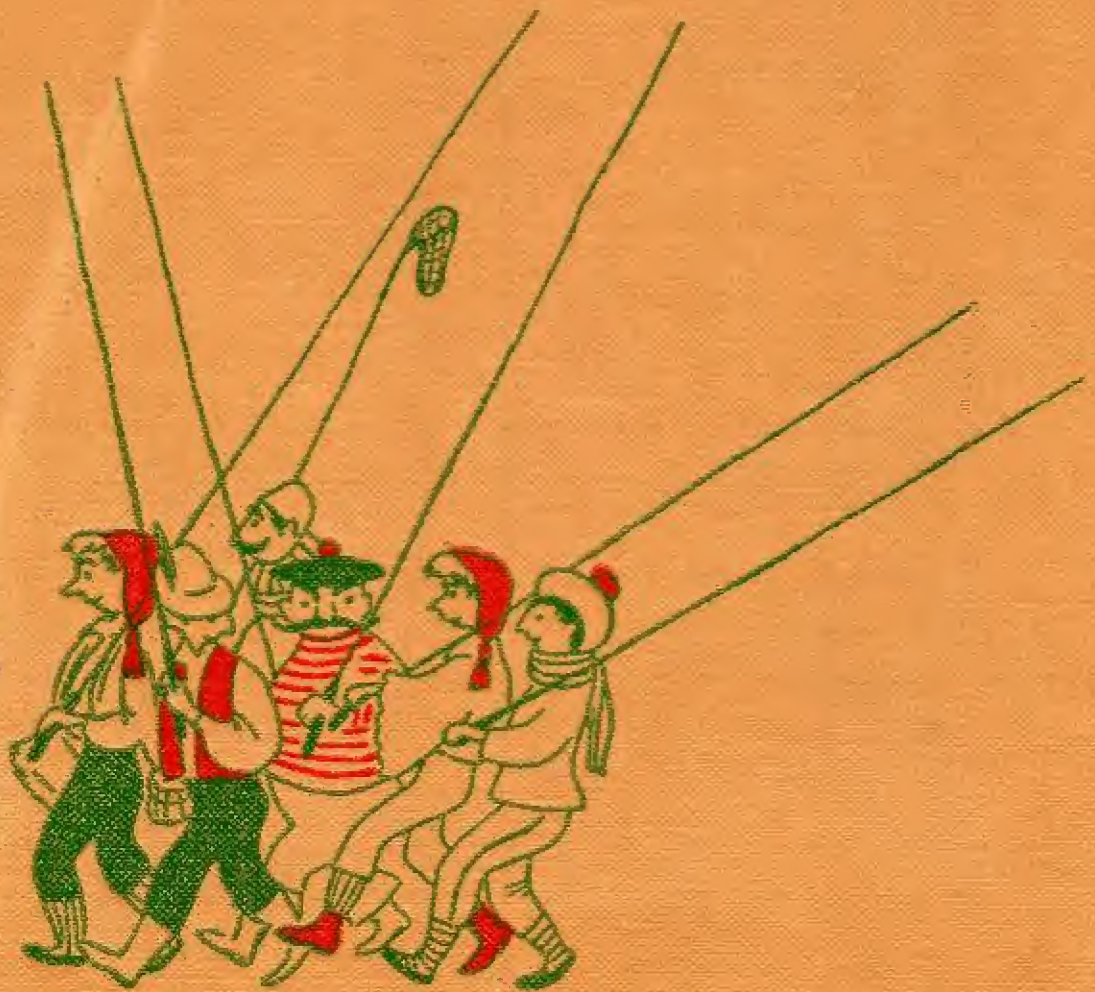


# Six Foolish Fishermen





SPINNING  
SCHOOL

# Six Foolish Fishermen

Based on a folktale in Ashton's  
*Chap-books of the Eighteenth Century*, 1882

By BENJAMIN ELKIN

Illustrations by Katherine Evans

CHILDRENS PRESS

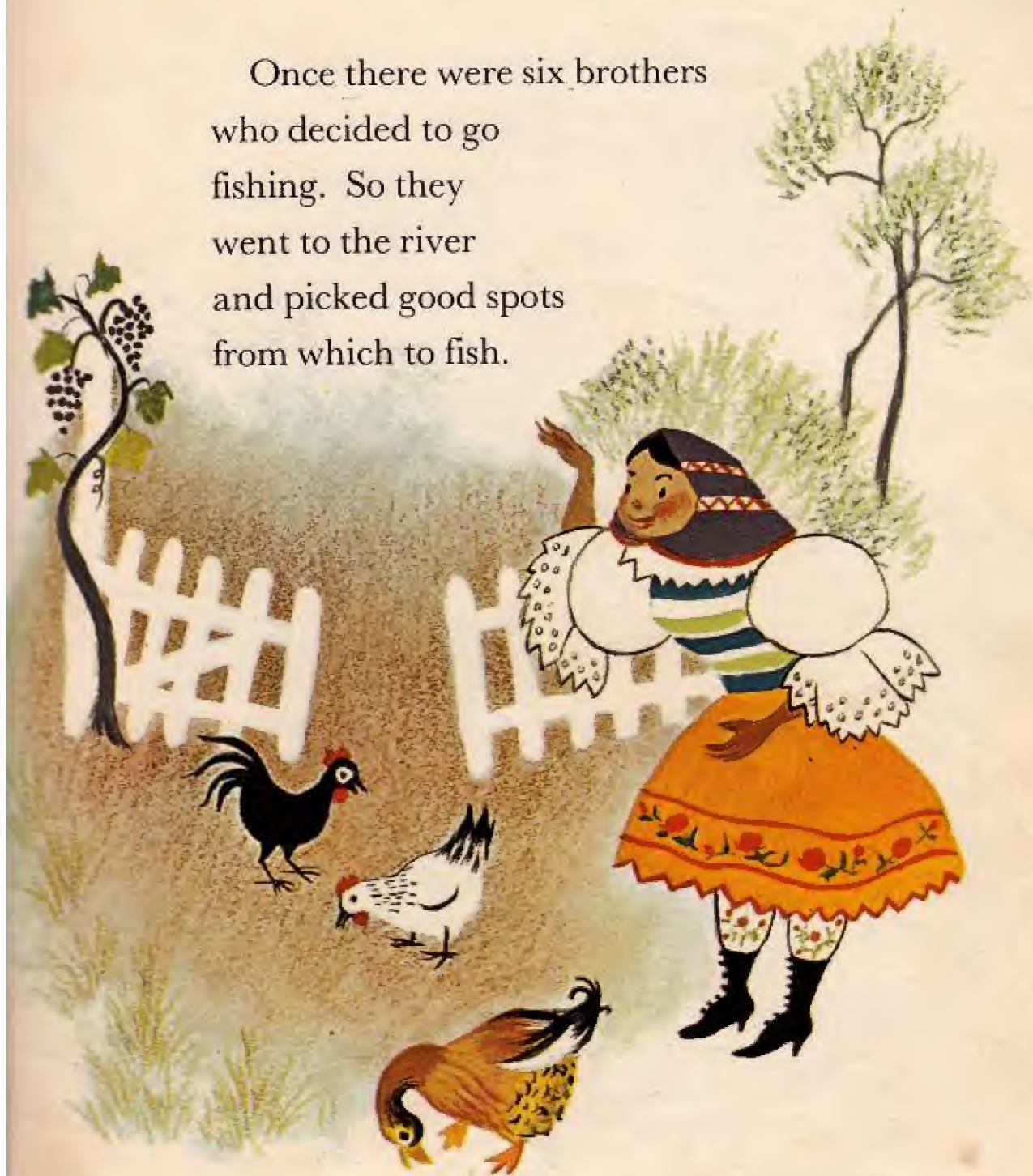




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Once there were six brothers  
who decided to go  
fishing. So they  
went to the river  
and picked good spots  
from which to fish.





“I will sit in this boat,”  
said the first brother.







“And I will kneel on this raft,”  
said the second brother.



“And I will lean on this log,”  
said the third brother.







“And I will stand on this  
bridge,” said the fourth brother.





“And I will lie on this rock,”  
said the fifth brother.



“And I will walk on this bank,”  
said the sixth brother.

SPINNING  
SCHOOL





And that is exactly what they did.  
Each brother fished from the  
spot he had chosen, and each one  
had good luck.

But when it was time to go home,  
the brothers became a little  
worried.

“We have been near the river,  
and over the river, and on the  
river,” said the brother in  
the boat. “One of us might  
easily have fallen into the water  
and been drowned. I shall count  
all the brothers to be sure there  
are six of us.”

And he began to count:







"I see one  
brother on the raft,  
That's *one*.



And another  
on the log.  
That's *two*.



And another  
on the bridge.  
That's *three*.





And another  
on the rock.  
That's *four*.



And another  
on the bank.  
That's *five*.



"Only *five*! Woe is me. We have  
lost a brother!" In his sorrow he  
didn't even notice that he had  
forgotten to count himself.



“Can it really be?” cried the  
brother on the raft. “Has one  
of us been drowned, and have we  
really lost a brother?”

And he, too, began to count:











"I see one  
brother on  
the log.  
That's *one*.

And another  
on the bridge.  
That's *two*.



And another  
on the rock.  
That's *three*.





And another  
on the bank.  
That's *four*.



And another  
in the boat.  
That's *five*.

“Only *five*. What will our dear mother say?”

And he, too, didn't even notice that he had forgotten to count himself.







“Let me check from here!”  
cried the brother  
on the log.







“I see one brother on the  
bridge. That’s *one*.

“And another on the rock.  
That’s *two*.

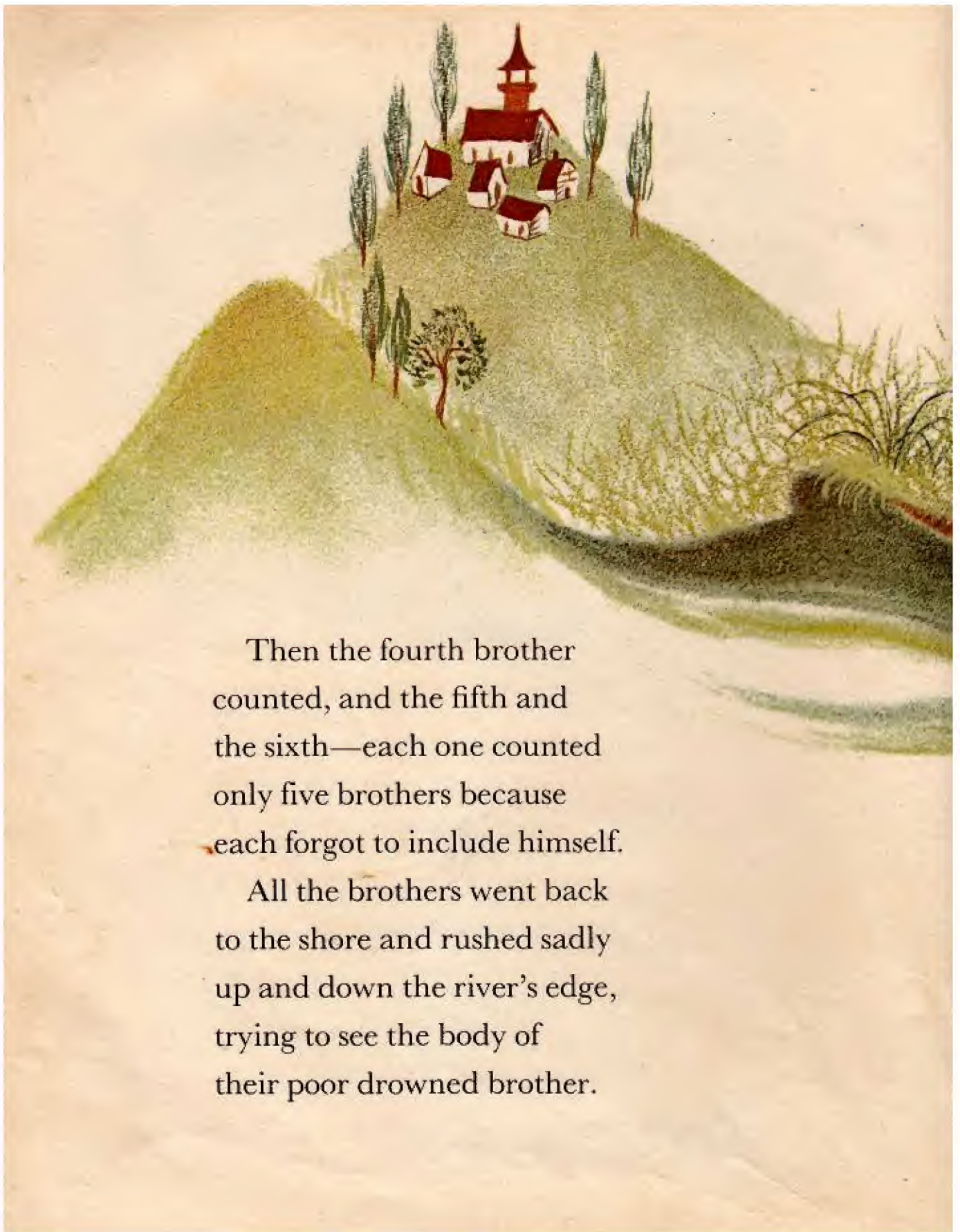
“And another on the bank.  
That’s *three*.





“And another in the boat.  
That’s *four*.

“And another on the raft.  
That’s *five*. *Five* in all,  
oh, unhappy day! Why did  
we ever come here, for one  
of us to be drowned!”



Then the fourth brother counted, and the fifth and the sixth—each one counted only five brothers because each forgot to include himself.

All the brothers went back to the shore and rushed sadly up and down the river's edge, trying to see the body of their poor drowned brother.







Then along came a boy who had also been fishing, but who had not caught a single fish.

“What’s the matter?” he asked. “You seem to have plenty of fish. Why do you all look so sad?”

“Because six of us came here to fish, and now there are only five of us left. One of our dear brothers has been drowned!”

The boy looked puzzled. “What do you mean, only five left? How do you figure that?”











“Look, I’ll show you,” said  
the eldest brother, and he  
pointed to his brothers:

“One.

Two.

Three.

Four.

Five.

“Six of us came here, and now  
only five are going back. Sad  
is the day!”

The boy turned to hide his smile,  
and then he turned back. “I think  
I can help you find your lost  
brother,” he said. “When I squeeze  
your hand, I want you to count.”



As hard as he could, he squeezed  
the hand of each of the brothers,  
in turn.

*"One!"* yelled the first brother,  
and he rubbed his aching hand.

*"Two!"* cried the second brother,  
and he jumped up and down because  
of the hard squeeze.

*"Three!"* shouted the third brother.

*"Four!"* shrieked the fourth brother.

*"Five!"* screamed the fifth brother.

*"Six!"* roared the sixth brother.

SIX! The brothers looked at  
each other in delight.









There were six of them again!  
They cheered for joy, and  
slapped each other on the back.  
Gratefully, they turned to the  
boy. "Here," they said, "We  
insist that you take all of our  
fish. We can never thank you  
enough for finding our dear,  
lost brother."

As the boy happily accepted  
their gift, the six foolish  
fisherman went their merry way.











